



MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

Iowa Learning Technology Committee

October 18, 2004

The following materials were provided in advance to the Committee members by Dr. Bruce Montgomery, Michigan Virtual University:

1. Freedom To Learn (FTL) Program Overview
2. FTL Professional Development
3. FTL September Update
4. FTL Framework/Glossary

Overview

Freedom to Learn (FTL) is an imaginative, statewide education program to improve student achievement in core academic subjects by providing Michigan's students with access to 21st Century learning tools. The focus is on creating a one-to-one environment in which students learn with computers, not simply about them. The program is also designed to bridge the digital divide, expanding technology opportunities to students, especially students in rural and high-priority schools.

Program Oversight

Freedom to Learn is jointly administered by the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Virtual University. Policy leadership is provided by an FTL Executive Committee comprised of decision-level representatives from the Governor's Office, Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Michigan Department of Management and Budget, Michigan Department of Information Technology, and Michigan Virtual University (MVU). FTL also has the assistance of a statewide advisory council from government, education, business, and industry.

One-to-One Wireless Learning

One-to-one wireless computing means that each participating student is provided a wireless technology device to use on a direct and continuing basis for the length of the grant. To the extent possible, students should not have to share the device with other students. It is the intent of the Freedom to Learn program to empower students with "anytime and anywhere" learning.

Targeted Grade

The FTL program targets middle school students, especially the sixth grade. Studies have shown that sixth grade is a time when students start to disengage from school and become uninterested. Freedom to Learn is a way to reach all children individually and re-engage them in their studies, as well as improving technology skills needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Funding Sources

Freedom to Learn is a state-enacted program utilizing \$17 million in federal funds (Title II, Part D of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). See Michigan Public Act 158 of 2003, Section 98b for details on the state legislation behind the 2003-04 FTL program (<http://michiganlegislature.org/documents/2003-2004/publicact/htm/2003-PA-0158.htm>).

Freedom to Learn was originally planned as a lease program, allowing \$1,100 per seat per pupil over the four-year program duration (\$250 per pupil per year plus \$25 per pupil per year school district contribution). In July 2004, the state decided the program would be better served with purchase rather than lease of the computers. Under the purchase program, the total allowance is \$1,000 per pupil plus \$40 school district contribution. The Michigan Department of Education allocated 25% of the federal grant funds to statewide professional development.

Senate Enrolled Bill 1069, Sec. 98b, (2004) appropriates \$3.75 million in state funds in 2004-05 for program administration and evaluation, professional development, content resources, assessment, and grant awards to eligible school districts. In addition, \$17.3 million in federal funding is designated for FTL grant awards and professional development.

Length of Program

Participating school districts awarded FTL grants have committed to the program for a minimum of four years through ongoing participation in the FTL program evaluation, professional development activities, and other related activities.

More than a Laptop Program

FTL is a totally integrated education technology solution, providing a data center, learning management system, educational software, digital curriculum, assessments online help desk, Internet content filter, and the highest available wireless security, and of course, laptop computers.

MVU works diligently with the FTL Demonstration Sites, intermediate school districts and other educational organizations to ensure that each school and each teacher is adequately prepared prior to receiving laptops.

Professional Development

At the core of the FTL program are strong, focused professional development opportunities for administrators, teachers and technology staff. All activities conform to the Michigan Department of Education's Professional Development Standards.

Because educators' time is at a premium, FTL offers a variety of programs, dates and times for both expected participation programs and voluntary participation, and are differentiated according to individuals' and groups' readiness for each learning experience. PD activities are coordinated by MVU and a consortium of Michigan education associations for K-12 teachers, administrators and technology coordinators, and include online options for "anywhere, anytime" learning. For PD events check the online calendar at <http://mivu.myschoolcal.com/calendar.php> and soon on Michigan LearnPort.

Communications

There are a variety of ways to keep informed about the Freedom to Learn (FTL) program:

- ◆ A dedicated help desk has been provided to support the Freedom to Learn Program. This Help Desk is for FTL Teachers and IT support staff only. School districts may contact the HP customer service help desk toll-free at (877) 286-7120 for service support, software and hardware issues.
- ◆ E-mail us at wireless@mivu.org to ask questions, comment or subscribe to our monthly FTL newsletter
- ◆ Call us at 517-664-5462
- ◆ Visit the FTL Web site at <http://wireless.mivu.org>
- ◆ Attend the FTL professional development sessions
<http://mivu.myschoolcal.com/calendar.php>
- ◆ Refer to the new FTL Manual available at http://wireless.mivu.org/images/manual_1.0.pdf. The FTL Manual is an evolving "how to" document for school administrators, teachers and technology personnel, providing a description of all aspects of the FTL program.

Professional Development

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Because educators’ time is at a premium, FTL offers a variety of programs, dates and times for both *expected participation* programs and *voluntary participation*, and are differentiated according to individuals’ and groups’ readiness for each learning experience. *It is expected that FTL participants will attend the following sessions.*

Audience	PD Program	Skills
Administrators	Orientation	Overview of FTL total solution
Administrators	Developing Shared Vision, Culture, Integration Techniques	Comprehensive leadership template for leading technology and instructional integration
Administrators	Technology Funding and Sustainability workshops	Strategies for acquiring funding for technology, sustaining and building capacity for technology acquisition
Teachers	Orientation	Overview of FTL total solution
Teachers	Connected Tech & Classroom Management	Accessing and utilizing web-based content and resources; integrating one-to-one in classroom; specific strategies unique to one-to-one classroom environments
Teachers	Integrating Technology through Inquiry (NTeQ) training	Creating technology integrated lessons and assessments tied to Michigan’s Curriculum Framework and Grade Level Content Expectations
Teachers	Tailored workshops based on identified needs	Need based workshops focused on specific skill development – unique to each region – teacher defined
Teachers	Class Server Discourse	Expertise in incorporating these tools with daily instruction in one to one environment
IT Staff	Orientation	Overview of FTL total solution
IT Staff	Class Server	Expertise in understanding and coaching using this learning management system

Demonstration Site Leadership

Demonstration sites will serve as coaches to Freedom to Learn participants. As the lead Demonstration Site, Kaleva Norman Dickson is assigning other Demo Sites to new FTL districts to provide ongoing, at-the-elbow support.

For All Participants

Participation in the FTL professional development programs is essential to successful project implementation and student achievement. It is expected that administrators, teachers and instructional technology staffs attend the sessions prepared for them. The most accurate information on the sessions is on the PD Calendar on the Freedom to Learn Web site and will soon be available on Michigan LearnPort. <http://mivu.myschoolcal.com/calendar.php>

ATA: Formerly known as the Ameritech Technology Academy, this is a train-the-trainer model that has provided instruction to more than 700 building-level teams — 2,800 educators who have, in turn, influenced thousands of their colleagues and students in Michigan. ATA uses a team approach to focus on integrating technology into the classroom and curriculum, and helping teachers become technology leaders and change agents. And now, ATA has tailored this one-day academy specifically to Freedom to Learn participants.

<http://www.ataacademy.org>

Microsoft Class Server: Designed to help educators address the challenges of meeting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements, Microsoft® Class Server 3.0 delivers real-time student achievement data and standards-aligned curriculum. Educators will learn how to use this tool to deliver course content online, improve and track student performance, and generate reports to enhance a district's data-driven decision process. Participants will discuss policies, procedures, guidelines and best practices that surround this new technology. See the Web site calendar for the training schedule.

Orientation: These sessions are face-to-face, full-day local workshops that provide a high level view of the complete Freedom to Learn solution for administrators, teachers and IT personnel. The sessions will review the infrastructure, hardware and software of the Hewlett Packard education technology package and provide hands-on experience using the new equipment, applications, tools and resources.

Connected Tech™ (Classroom Connect): In this session, teachers will learn how to use Connected Tech resources, which include lessons, projects and tutorials aligned to the ISTE National Education Technology Standards, assessment rubrics, quizzes and self-assessment checklists. Teachers will also learn how to use Connected Tech's electronic individual student tracking.

For Administrators

Connected University Online Courses: Connected University is an online professional development community, offering educators round-the-clock resources, online courses, software tutorials and instructional support. Connected University provides recommendations, sorted by learner type (such as administrators, elementary teachers, library and media specialists) and by specialty area (assessment and evaluation, technology basics, and integrating technology into the curriculum). CU's Technology Skills Appraisal and Technology Methods Appraisal will help educators know which skills they should work on. The appraisals are based on ISTE's National Education Technology Standards. CU offers learning opportunities for any educator's professional interest and provides the tools to help them easily identify where to begin. <http://cu.classroom.com/logon.asp>

Developing Shared Vision, Culture, Techniques for Program Support: The success of any district's Freedom to Learn program relies heavily on the "buy-in" of everyone from the top down, including parents and caregivers. This session presents methods for developing an organization-wide culture for innovation, engaging teachers and staff, and putting theories to the test.

E-Learning, Policy, Leadership Development (Michigan Education Policy Fellowship Program): Freedom to Learn is sponsoring a 12-person cohort for this 10-month program that concentrates on developing leadership skills in policy design and implementation at the local, state and national levels. The program explores public policy issues, links participants to key figures who shape and influence the process, and enables individuals ("fellows") to develop new leadership skills for education and community leaders. The fellows meet monthly for seminars, presentations, workshops, interactive learning, and leadership development activities. <http://www.educ.msu.edu/epfp/>

Funding and Sustainability Models: Seminars are available to address sustainability questions such as: What state, federal and local resources are available to school districts and how they can be obtained to sustain the Freedom to Learn program? What are the potential for fund development and the state and federal restrictions on use? In addition, MVU will provide districts with sample local plans and funding models for the purposes of this subdivision and with information on available federal and private resources.

Grant Writing: Many resources exist to support technology acquisition. This session will help districts source prospective funds and maximize their efforts in applying for them. It covers such topics as where to look for funding, what a well-written proposal looks like, and what funding agencies are looking for.

LEADing the Future Workshop: A collaborative project of the Michigan K-12 education community, this program is targeting 4,000 Michigan K-12 district superintendents and school principals for leadership and technology training. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to provide professional development and provides a high-end personal digital assistant (PDA) device to each participant. This workshop is specific to Freedom to Learn administrators. <http://www.leadmichigan.org>

Roundtables, Debriefing, Dialogue Session: Administrators strongly recommended these be provided to share best practice, reflect on program implementation, discuss needs, etc.

Systems Thinking/Decision-Making: More than just a classroom of computers, Freedom to Learn provides tool to help administrators develop “big picture” perspectives and apply critical thinking skills to the integration of technology in the curriculum and district operations.

For Supercoaches

Supercoaches have been designated to assist Michigan Virtual University and the Michigan Department of Education with providing professional development, sustained coaching and mentoring to Freedom to Learn lead teachers. Each supercoach will work with regional lead teachers as a coach, program communication link, facilitator of training and in program evaluation for the duration of the program.

Supercoaches were nominated by Demo Site representatives or were Michigan Technology Integration Professional Scholars. To qualify to become an FTL supercoach, individuals participated in a week of NTeQ (Integrating Technology through Inquiry) training.

For Lead Teachers

Each school district should name a lead teacher who will serve as a driving force behind the rest of the staff. Lead teachers will attend special “train-the-trainer” sessions and convey their knowledge to their colleagues. Teachers interested in becoming a lead teacher should fill out the application (appendices B-2) and send it to the appropriate person listed on the form.

Lead Teacher Roundtables, Dialogue Session: These sessions will cover topics the Freedom to Learn administrators might not have thought of yet! They will also be excellent forums for sharing best practices and tips of all kinds.

NTeQ: Integrating Technology through Inquiry is a nationally accepted, research-based, constructivist model for integrating technology with teaching and learning. This session incorporates the NTeQ model with the Michigan core curriculum, and shows teachers how the 10 NTeQ steps to creating lesson plans can help students develop real-life knowledge and skills.

For All FTL Teachers

ATA Academy: ATA has tailored this one-day academy specifically to Freedom to Learn participants. <http://www.ataacademy.org>

For teachers, topics include project-based learning, modeling an integrated unit, sharing successes, copyright and licensing issues, searching and resource evaluation, MiClimb and student assessment. Teachers work with their own curricular unit and develop an integrated lesson they can use in their classes.

For administrators, break-out sessions include identifying grant opportunities and writing grant applications, technology planning and management, and resource sharing.

Berrien ISD Online Courses: Three online courses related to technology integration are available through the BISD Web site. Lead teachers are encouraged to take advantage of these courses.

<http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/bcisd>

Generation YES (Youth and Educator Succeeding): Generation YES exists to help schools tap into the problem-solving power of their own students and teachers. It began as a Technology Innovation Challenge Grant in the state of Washington and now is a global program that calls for student input in the effort to infuse technology into curricula and schools. The heart of the program is a Gen Y class in which students are paired with a partner-teacher at the school. Each student-teacher teams then produces its own lesson plan, curriculum unit, or other technology-enriched curriculum project. As the projects come together, the partnerships get the technology support they need when and where they need it — in their classroom. Students learn both technology skills and “soft” skills, such as planning and collaboration, and teachers benefit from sustainable technology professional development. A pilot opportunity will be offered to Demo Sites only for the 2004-05 year. <http://www.genyes.org>

Semi-annual conference: Each Freedom to Learn district selects an individual to serve as the lead teacher and liaison to activities that can be reported back to other teachers at their district.

Squeakfest: This two-day event explores the unlimited creativity of Squeak, an easy-to-use authoring tool that is especially well-suited to math, science and games. Sessions will examine types of student projects, lesson plans, assessment details, stories, anecdotes, pedagogical approaches, etc. What worked and why? What can we draw as conclusions and teach each other? www.squeakland.org

Van Andel Education Institute Summer Academy: How do we make technology pay off? “You can have the fastest Internet connection, the best computer, and the most sophisticated curriculum software, but if the teachers aren’t trained in how to use it, it’s not going to make a difference in the classroom.” The Van Andel Education Institute provides this summer technology workshop for teachers to participate in an “engaged learning” model of pedagogy. Explore the project-based learning model and research-based strategies and tools, and create an interactive multimedia presentation. Even educators with limited computer experience beyond word processing will enjoy using such software tools as PrintShop, AppleWorks, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, KidPix, HyperStudio, eJournal, Inspiration, Kidspiration, GraphMaster and iMovie. To enroll, go to <http://www.vai.org/vaei>.

For Technology Coordinators

ATA Academy: ATA has tailored this one-day academy specifically to Freedom to Learn participants. (www.ataacademy.org) For technology staff, sessions are tailored to implementation and support topics.

HP Virtual Classroom: Monthly application demonstration and PowerPoint presentations to update FTL technical staff. Topics to include wireless security, streamlining tech support and repair procedures, Windows XP and user management, and HP 420 access point set up.

September Update

Participation: 19,315 students are participating in the Freedom to Learn (FTL) program.

- ◆ Fifty-eight of the 174 participating school buildings (one-third of the buildings) are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Based on 2002-03 data, this represents 28% of the total number of schools in Michigan with 6th grades that are not meeting AYP.
- ◆ School districts include Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Pontiac, Lansing, and Saginaw.
- ◆ To date, school districts have opted for the Hewlett Packard solution for more than 95 percent of the participating students. Most students will start the program in fall 2004.

Funding: Senate Enrolled Bill 1069 (2004) is waiting the Governor's signature as of 9/20/04. Sec. 98b would allocate amounts not to exceed \$10,343,200 in federal funds, \$7,000,000 in carry-over federal funds, and \$3,750,000 in state funds to the FTL program (FTL program would be transferred to FSU if MVU ceases to operate or fails to perform its function described in Sec. 98b).

Of the \$3,750,000 in state funds,

- ◆ \$2,450,000 is for MVU to use for statewide activities
 - \$1,700,000 to develop a professional development network in partnership with other statewide entities for professional development on technology integration in the classroom.
 - \$250,000 for development of a content resource package that will include on-line coursework content.
 - \$500,000 for program administration and comprehensive statewide evaluation of current and future projects.
- ◆ \$300,000 to Ferris State University to develop or purchase an on-line assessment system to supplement the Michigan education assessment program tests and provide immediate feedback on pupil achievement.
- ◆ \$1,000,000 for grants to eligible school districts to participate in the FTL program, including the acquisition of technology devices for student and teachers.

Professional Development: Twenty-five percent of the program budget is committed to professional development for school administrators, teachers and technical staff. Sessions include an orientation to the FTL program, technical training on both hardware and software, and workshops on integrating technology into the curriculum for successful student outcomes.

- ◆ Through September 2004, over 50 FTL training sessions have been delivered to administrators, teachers, and technology coordinators.
- ◆ 36 super coaches have been designated to assist MVU and the MDE with providing professional development, sustained coaching and mentoring to Freedom to Learn lead teachers.
- ◆ 115 buildings have identified a lead teacher to mentor other teachers and to work with principals and technology coordinators to facilitate coaching, communication and program evaluation.



Program Framework

GLOSSARY

<http://wireless.mivu.org>

The primary goal of the Freedom to Learn (FTL) program is to increase student achievement through improved instructional delivery based on the Michigan Curriculum Framework (MCF) and Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE). MCF and GLCE are Michigan's standards and benchmarks for student achievement as assessed by the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP).

The Freedom to Learn initiative is organized around six FOCUS AREAS – Context, Classroom Tools, Curriculum and Content Resources, Teacher and Administrator Mentoring, Help Desk, and Evaluation. Within each of these areas, HP and the FTL coordinating team have assembled specific DELIVERY TOOLS to support teachers and other school personnel to facilitate student achievement, particularly as related to MEAP. A variety of DELIVERY MODES for professional development allows for teachers to access the program components in order to successfully build and implement this program.

The following is a summary FTL technology integration framework for teachers' professional development and tools that will facilitate those processes.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT Successful achievement of program goals depends in part upon all participants having familiarity with the overall context of the Freedom to Learn program. Various tools are used to familiarize teachers, students, parents, administrators, staff and other local stakeholders with the purpose and vision of FTL.

FTL Orientation An overview of FTL total solution is presented in a face-to-face workshop. It is required that every participating teacher, administrator and technology staff member will attend an orientation prior to starting an FTL program in school.
Partners: HP, Demo Sites, ISDs, REMCs, MASA, MAISA, Classroom Connect, FTL Team¹

FTL Web site and Manual (<http://wireless.mivu.org>) An online repository of information about the FTL total solution organized around special interests of participating teachers, administrators and technology staff members, along with students and parents. The site is updated regularly, with the intention of sharing lessons learned and best practices.

The FTL Manual for participants in the Freedom to Learn program is an evolving “how to” document for school administrators, teachers and technology personnel. Contains 29 pages with 10 appendices and 12 links to informational Web sites.
Partners: HP, FTL Team

¹ FTL Team includes the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Virtual University.

FTL Newsletter More than 500 FTL stakeholders receive updates and reminders monthly in an e-newsletter format. In addition, the FTL program sends e-mail weekly to FTL participants with reminders and instructions for school participation. The program also holds an open conference call each week to answer questions from FTL participating schools. Participants may subscribe to an FTL listserv.

Partners: FTL Team

FTL Video (in progress) A 5-8 minute video is designed for schools to educate their stakeholders about the FTL program, so that

- Teachers and staff members have a common background and understanding of the purpose and direction for program,
- Students, parents and caregivers appreciate this new learning opportunity and maximize the benefits for best possible learning outcomes.
- School board members and local taxpayers understand the value of this investment and the unique opportunity that it provides for enhancing student achievement.

Partners: HP, FTL Team, Demo Sites (Flint and KND)

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

Microsoft ClassServer provides a wizard template for teachers to develop lessons and assessments, linked to the MCF and GLCE. Student learning progress is able to be directly assessed, just in time, and thereby inform future instruction. To this extent, teachers will be know and predict students' standardized test performance.

Partners: HP, MS, FTL Team, Classroom Connect, ISDs, REMCs, MASA, MAISA

Integrating Technology in Teaching and Learning (NteQ) is a nationally accepted, research-based, constructivist model for integrating technology with teaching and learning. Teachers use the 10 NTeQ steps to create lesson plans to help students develop real-life knowledge and skills.

Partners: HP, FTL Team, University of Memphis

Discourse (Education Testing Service) allows teachers and students to communicate, one on one, in the classroom. Teachers can present questions, quizzes, and interrogatories any time during a lesson. Students respond online and teachers view each student's responses. This one to one interaction allows students to personally share knowledge and status during a lesson and a teacher to use that information as a guide for appropriate instruction or response.

Partners: ETS, HP, FTL Team

GenerationYES engages student-teacher teams in collaborative, technology-enriched curriculum projects. Students not only learn the technology skills necessary to complete the project, but also "soft" skills, such as planning and collaboration, necessary to complete these authentic long-term projects. As the project unfolds, the teacher gets technology support they need when and where they need it – in their classroom. The result is authentic project-based learning for the students and sustainable technology professional development for the teachers. This powerful model has been refined and proven in real classrooms around the world. Piloted for FTL by 4 Demo sites.

Partners: GenerationYES, HP, FTL Team, Demo sites participating as pilots

In TechYES, students take on the major responsibility of becoming technologically proficient by creating projects that meet state and local technology proficiency requirements. As part of TechYES, a structured peer-mentoring program assists the teacher or advisor, and provides student leadership opportunities that serve to further strengthen the program and enrich the learning community. Piloted for FTL by 4 Demo sites.

Partners: GenerationYES, HP, FTL Team, Demo sites participating as pilots

CURRICULUM & CONTENT RESOURCES

Connected Tech provides web-based content and resources tied to the curriculum framework and grade level content expectations, with tools to build appropriate lessons. Teachers communicate with students and parents/caregivers through the Connected Tech site. Parents/caregivers can go to this site anywhere there is Internet access (guidance provided to parents without Internet access at home). Parents/caregivers are up to date and informed regarding their children's assignments and school progress.

Partners: HP, MS, FTL Team, Classroom Connect, ISDs, REMCs, MASA, MAISA

LearningPaqs are popular grade- and subject-specific educational software titles that schools receive at no additional cost with the purchase an HP notebook computer. These Paqs are available in subjects such as reading, language arts, social studies, math and science.

Partners: HP

Michigan eLibrary (MeL) is an anywhere, anytime information gateway to selected Internet resources, full-text magazines, newspapers, electronic books online practice tests and more. The Library of Michigan has purchased more than \$3.6 million in resources for Michigan with funding from the State of Michigan and a Library Services and Technology Act grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Partners: State Library of Michigan, FTL Team

OneNote is an easy-to-use tool that enables students to capture information, including notes from lectures, in multiple ways and then organize and reuse them according to their needs.

Partners: HP, MS

Squeak is an easy-to-use authoring tool that is especially well suited to math, science and games. Teachers can use Squeak to create student projects, lesson plans, assessment details, stories, anecdotes, and pedagogical approaches.

Partners: HP

TEACHER & ADMINISTRATOR MENTORING

Seven Demonstration Sites serve as coaches to Freedom to Learn participants. As the lead Demonstration Site, Kaleva Norman Dickson has assigned other Demo Sites to each new FTL district to provide ongoing, at-the-elbow support.

Partners: Demo Sites, FTL Team

Special Advisors (in development) are being recruited to visit each FTL school building to assess needs and develop an action plan. Follow-up activities recommended by the School Advisors may include team teaching, technology coaching and leadership mentoring. Early focus will be applied to the school buildings that are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), in conjunction with other AYP initiatives.

Partners: Demo Sites, FTL Team

Supercoaches have been designated to assist Michigan Virtual University and the Michigan Department of Education with providing professional development, sustained coaching and mentoring to Freedom to Learn lead teachers. Each supercoach will work with regional lead teachers as a coach, program communication link, training facilitator, and program evaluation consultant for the duration of the program. Many supercoaches are also Michigan Technology Integration Professional (MTIP) Scholars. Demo Site representatives nominated the others. Each supercoach first participates in a week of NTeQ training, followed by ongoing specialized PD.

Partners: Demo Sites, FTL Team, ISDs, REMCs, MASA, MAISA,

Each of the over 150 school buildings has designated a lead teacher to serve as a driving force behind the rest of the staff. Lead teachers attend special “train-the-trainer” sessions and convey their knowledge to their colleagues.

Partners: Demo Sites, FTL Team

Leadership Development is focused on the specific leadership skills needed to ensure achievement of program goals. What and how to observe, when and with whom to communicate, developing shared vision and instructional goals are several examples of the curriculum addressed in workshop sessions facilitated by Dr. William Hamilton. Online courses are being developed for those who are not able to participate in face-to-face opportunities. There will be follow-up administrators’ workshops throughout the school year for debriefing, sharing and problem-solving.

Partners: Walled Lake Consolidated Schools, FTL Team

FTL is sponsoring a 12-person cohort for the 10-month Michigan Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) that concentrates on developing leadership skills in policy design and implementation at the local, state and national levels. The program explores public policy issues, links participants to key figures who shape and influence the process, and enables individuals (“fellows”) to develop new leadership skills for education and community leaders. The fellows meet monthly for seminars, presentations, workshops, interactive learning, and leadership development activities.

<http://www.educ.msu.edu/epfp/>

Partners: Demo Sites, FTL Team, EPFP

Seminars are available to address funding and sustainability questions such as: What state, federal and local resources are available to school districts and how they can be obtained to sustain the Freedom to Learn program? What are the potential for fund development and the state and federal restrictions on use? In addition, MVU will provide districts with sample local plans and funding models for the purposes of this subdivision and with information on available federal and private resources.

Partners: FTL Team, The Sage Team, Peterson Public Sector Consulting, LLC

Grant writing sessions will help districts source prospective funds and maximize their efforts in applying for them. It covers such topics as where to look for funding, what a well-written proposal looks like, and what funding agencies are looking for.

Partners: FTL Team, The Sage Team, Peterson Public Sector Consulting, LLC

HELP DESK

A dedicated help desk has been provided to support the Freedom to Learn Program. This Help Desk is for FTL Teachers and IT support staff. School districts may contact the HP customer service help desk toll-free at (877) 286-7120 for service support, software and hardware issues. The help desk provides support around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The expected period of prime usage is Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 10 PM, Eastern Standard Time.

Partners: HP, FTL Team

FTL facilitates a weekly conference call with teachers and administrators to provide updates and address specific concerns or questions about the FTL program package.

Partners: HP, FTL Team

EVALUATION

All districts participating in the Freedom to Learn program have agreed to become part of a formal statewide learning community to promote sound implementation strategies and sharing of best practices. Schools actively participate in the FTL statewide program evaluation being conducted by Michigan State University's Center for Teaching and Technology. The Center under the direction of Dr. Yong Zhao surveys and interviews teachers, administrators, technical coordinators, students and parents who are involved in the FTL program.

Partners: MSU

FTL has also partnered with the University of Memphis' key school reform researcher, Dr. Steven M. Ross. Dr. Ross and his colleagues are training FTL teachers in classroom evaluation techniques that will measure students' academic and program performance. In addition, teachers' progress is also measured. Teachers can apply these formative evaluation techniques to regularly assess students' progress toward MEAP, and other achievement goals. Those findings will gauge students' readiness and progress toward achievement status. They will also inform teachers regarding what will need to happen, pedagogically, to better prepare students to achieve.

Dr. Ross and his team will longitudinally study the FTL program to assess general program and student achievement goals. This study will be done in tandem with that being addressed by MSU.

Partners: University of Memphis